

nearly three feet, I brought out some freshly-cast bones of fish, convincing me that I was right in my surmise. The day following, the 9th of May, I again visited the spot with a spade, and, after removing nearly 2 feet square of the turf, dug down to the nest without disturbing the entrance-hole or the passage which led to it. Here I found four eggs placed on the usual layer of fish-bones; all of these I removed with care, and then filled up the hole, beating the earth down as hard as the bank itself, and replacing the sod on the top in order that barge-horses passing to and fro might not put a foot in the hole. A fortnight afterwards the bird was seen to leave the hole again, and my suspicion was awakened that she had taken to her old breeding-quarters a second time. The first opportunity I had of again visiting this place, which was exactly twenty-one days from the date of my former exploration and taking the eggs, I again passed the top of my fly-rod up the hole, and found not only that the hole was of the former length, but that the female was within. I then took a large mass of cotton wool from my collecting-box, and stuffed it to the extremity of the hole, in order to preserve the eggs and nest from damage during my again laying it open from above. On removing the sod and digging down as before, I came upon the cotton wool, and beneath it a well-formed nest of fish-bones, the size of a small saucer, the walls of which were fully half an inch thick, together with eight beautiful eggs and the old female herself. This mass of bones, then, weighing 700 grains, had been cast up and deposited by the bird or the bird and its mate, besides the unusual number of eight eggs, in the short space of twenty-one days. To gain anything like an approximate idea of the number of fish that had been taken to form this mass, the skeleton of a minnow, their usual food, must be carefully made and weighed; and this I may probably do upon some future occasion. I think we may now conclude, from what I have adduced, that the bird purposely deposits these bones as a nest; and nothing can be better adapted, as a platform, to defend the eggs from the damp earth.—*Proc. Zool. Soc.* May 10, 1859.

Descriptions of new Species of Salamanders from China and Siam.

By DR. J. E. GRAY, F.R.S., V.P.Z.S., &c.

Mr. Fortune, on his late return from China, brought with him for the British Museum a bottle containing a Salamander, some Fishes, and a Leech, collected from a river on the north-east coast of China, inland from Ningpo.

The Fishes are two varieties (olive and golden) of a very peculiar monstrosity of the common gold fish of China, *Cyprinus auratus*, which has long been known, and is figured in several of the Chinese works.

It is peculiar for having a very short and thick body, entirely destitute of any dorsal fin, with a regularly trifold or three-finned tail, and more especially for having very large and swollen eyes, which give a distorted appearance to the animal,—the pupil of the eyes

being on the upper part of the swollen orbs, and on a level with the upper surface of the back.

The Salamander or Newt was obtained from the same stream. It is curious as being the first example of the family which has been found in Continental Asia, though there are several species common in Japan.

It is nearly allied to, and appears to belong to the same genus as one of the Japanese specimens; but at the same time it is quite distinct, as a species, from any yet received from that country.

It may be indicated as—

CYNOPS CHINENSIS.

Above uniform dark olive (in spirits); beneath bluish-black, with small, unequal, irregular, yellow spots on the chin, neck, belly, and under side of the legs; the spots on the belly are the largest; the under edge of the tail reddish-yellow; skin acutely granular.

Var. 1. Tail pale grey, brown on each side, with a blackish marginal band above and below, and with a yellow inferior edge.

Hab. River, N.E. Coast of China, inland from Ningpo.

This species resembles in the form of the head, the parotid glands, and in the granular state of the skin, *Cynops pyrrhogaster* of Japan; but it differs from it in its much larger size and in the style of its colouring, especially on its under side. *C. pyrrhogaster* is dark red, with large black blotches or spots; while this is dark lead-coloured, with small yellow spots.

The Leech is one of the Land Leeches, with a lunate head, similar to those received from Ceylon.

The British Museum has also received, in a collection of reptiles and fishes obtained in Siam by Mr. Mouhot, two specimens of a species of Newt, which is so exceedingly like the *Plethodon glutinosum* of North America in external appearance, that is to say in form, size, and colour, and also in the distribution of the palatine teeth, that I was at first inclined to regard them as specimens of the American animal which had been sent to Siam. But I cannot believe this to be the case, as they were enclosed in a bottle containing several kinds of reptiles, which are evidently all natives of Siam. I may observe that this is the first time that any species of Newt has been received from Continental India.

I propose to designate the Siamese species

PLETHODON PERSIMILE.

Black, white-speckled, the specks closer and more abundant on the sides; the hind toes elongate, unequal. Tail compressed.

Hab. Siam.

The only character that I can find between the two specimens received from Siam, and some twenty or more of *P. glutinosum* from different parts of the United States in the Museum collection, is that the toes of the hind feet appeared rather longer, more slender, and unequal in length, and the tail much more compressed.—*Proc. Zool. Soc.* June 28, 1859.